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ABSTRACT

The techniques of chapter mapping, reading chapter keys, and "T-note" making can help a student overcome immediate academic problems and stimulate student interest in taking a more thorough study skills course at a later time. Completed chapter maps provide the student with several immediate benefits, including a one-page list of all topics discussed in the chapter, a visual overview of the chapter's scope and sequence, and a single reference page to look at while the instructor lectures. The ten keys to textbook previewing are the (1) title, (2) introduction, (3) summary, (4) pictures and maps, (5) chapter questions, (6) subtopic titles, (7) first paragraphs following the subtopics, (8) first sentences of paragraphs, (9) special print (italics), and (10) bold print (usually for technical vocabulary). The T-note making system organizes information on a notebook page, letting important information stand out on the left side, while support material is grouped and arranged on the right side with special or general information labeled and placed in the center portions of the page. (RL)

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HIGH YIELD STUDY SKILLS INSTRUCTION

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When a student seeks advice to improve his learning performance, the request is frequently urgent. This is a difficult instructional situation because the student needs help immediately. In addition the instructional decisions must be made with limited diagnosis. Due to the time limits (often ten to fifteen minutes) most of the faulty study skills which may trouble the student cannot be corrected. However, something can be done even in a short interview by working in three high yield areas. Instruction in 1. chapter mapping, 2. chapter keys, and 3. note-making yield the most benefits to improve student performance for the amount of time consumed in a short interview.

Chapter Mapping

Chapter mapping is a valuable initial high yield area. Many reading and study skills practioners support the theory that a lecture class will consist of approximately sixty percent lecture information and forty percent text information. However, the student needing study skills help may see the text as a special problem area simply because it is presented in written form. Chapter mapping will serve to make the text manageable without adding a work load of new skill areas to learn.

Chapter mapping is a student-prepared outline using only the titles, sub-titles, and minor topic headings provided by the textbook author. This kind of outline becomes easier with the explanation that the size of print determines the importance of the topic. For instance, the largest type size will, of course, be the most important topic. The next smaller size will be a sub-topic. This

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explanation will direct the mapping process and make it non-threatening. It also helps erase any stigma associated with outlining that the students may have. With this process even a lengthy chapter (i.e., 20 to 35 pages) can be outlined in three to five minutes.

Completed chapter maps provides the student with several immediate benefits.

1. The student has a one-page list of all topics discussed in the textbook chapter.
2. While preparing the map, the student has developed a visual over-view of the chapter's scope and sequence.
3. The student has a single reference page while the instructor lectures. This allows the student to note the portion of the textbook which should be read closely before the scheduled exam.

Mapping is a specific task that the student is able to complete quickly and easily. This task has closure in addition to future utility. Chapter mapping allows a student to ease into the task of reading to learn, for a few students have real difficulty of learning. It is the simple fact they do not have an organized approach, nor do they devote enough time to the learning effort. Starting with chapter mapping the student settles down and then is able to move more readily into the more difficult and complex task of reading to learn. Then with a chapter map in hand (this should be written on a single notebook page) the student is encouraged to listen carefully to identify the topics referred to by the instructor, then to mark those topics for later rereading.

2. The Ten Keys

The ten keys to textbook previewing is another high-yield area. A student seeking immediate help is often troubled by a slow reading speed and the inability to distinguish important facts from examples or explanations. The keys to text information become a high-yield area by eliminating the major portion of a chapter and by concentrating on the fewest number of words which contain the greatest amount of information. This controlled preview plan allows the slower reader to make long reading assignments manageable by concentrating his study time reading in high yield information areas.

The ten keys that are generally accepted for textbook previewing are:

1. Title
2. Introduction
3. Summary
4. Pictures, maps, etc.
5. Chapter questions
6. Subtopic titles
7. First paragraph following each sub-topic
8. First sentence of each paragraph
9. Special print--italics (usually important data)
10. Bold print (usually technical vocabulary)

Instructors can develop a portfolio of tips and suggestions for students by reviewing how-to-study books prepared by authorities such as Pauk, Roberson, Christ, Staton and Hanau.

3. Note-Making

Note-making is a (major) high yield skill since the class lecture often contains sixty percent of the course information. The basic philosophy of any successful note form involves being brief, being accurate, and being useful for study. Any note-making system the student presently uses may be satisfactory. However, note-making can be evaluated by determining the student's consistency in recording large ideas, numbered details, definitions, and visual aids such as pictures, charts, maps and graphs. A student should be led to understand that a verbatim transcript of a lecture is not as useful for study as a set of notes with a controlled and organized pattern. Any student note-taking problems can be corrected with a few basic explanations of the T-Note system.

Organized Notes

The variety of types of information and the range of instructors' teaching styles demand flexibility and adaptability in any note-taking system. Students must be able to listen and to organize meaningful notes rather than just copy what they have heard or viewed. The T-Note system provides this organization. Lecture information is placed on the page according to the types of information it is. First, the student is instructed to use three-ring, notebook paper and to write on one side of each page only.

Then the page of the loose-leaf notebook paper is divided down the center and across the top forming a large "T" which establishes three primary positions for recording information (Figure 1). Across the top in the upper left column is the location for identification of the course, the date, and the note page number. The left column below the top of the "T" is for recording "large" ideas (Figure 2). A large idea is considered to be any word or phrase that will be followed by supporting information. Often this occurs with a cue such as: the three primary causes of the Civil War were.... The large idea is "causes of the Civil War." The cue for the details is the word "three." Thus, the words in the left column become in the students' minds, "What were the three causes of the Civil War?" The details are then written in the right column of the "T." The right column is used for recording details and supporting information. Across from the large idea "the three causes of the Civil War" will come the three details that answer that question. Each specific answer would be placed on a separate line and numbered for quick location and learning during the review session.

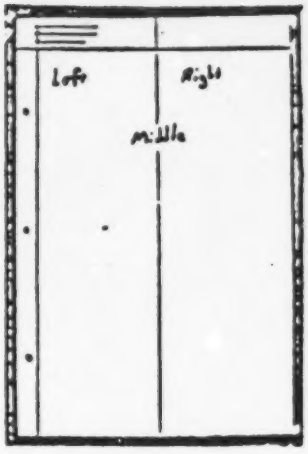

Figure 1

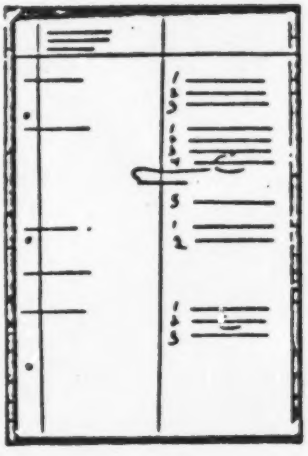

Figure 2

Vocabulary

When students are familiar with the specialized technical vocabulary of a course, many potential learning difficulties, such as loss of memory and poor comprehension, can be dramatically reduced. Technical words or phrases to be learned are easy to locate using the T-Note system because the T-Note method uses the center line as the vocabulary locator. The new vocabulary term should be written across the middle dividing line. The definition or explanatory information should be written into the right column (Figure 3). Such positioning allows the vocabulary terms and definitions to be easily located for review and study. Important terms are often stated by the instructor and then carefully defined. The student should assume that any term carefully defined by an instructor will be included on the next exam.

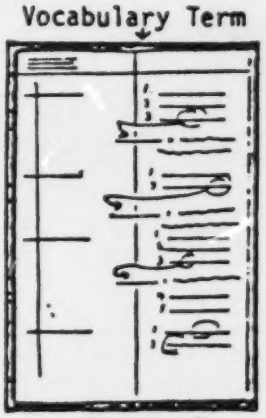

Figure 3

Frequently, the instructor may use a term or phrase during a lecture that the student is not familiar with. That word or phrase should also be marked by circling it. A circled word then signals to the learner that the term should be studied later (Figure 3 above).

Pictorial Information

Recording pictorial information is made easier when following the T-Note plan. Some instructors use one or more kinds of visual

aids during each lecture presentation. Examples of these teacher visual aids are (1) chalkboard drawings, (2) flip charts, (3) transparencies, (4) slides, and (5) filmstrips. When these kinds of information appear, the student can draw these pictorial large ideas into the left column. The visual large idea should consume 1/4 to 1/3 of the notebook page. The descriptive terms or labels should be listed into the right column. Connective lines could be drawn from the picture to the proper descriptive term (Figure 4).

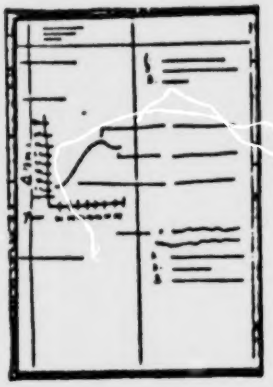

Figure 4

Handouts

Use of a three-ring binder and loose-leaf notebook paper for T-Notes provides the materials for effective placement of teacher handouts. Study of handouts is most effective when studied in the exact sequence as presented during a lecture. A cue to the handout can be placed in the left or large idea column. With a hole punch, the student can position this specific handout and information into the best possible sequence for later review, and at the same time eliminate the possibility of losing the handout.

Examples and General Information

One of the unique features of the T-Note plan is its simple, yet consistent, organizational style; therefore, any deviation from that organizational plan will receive special attention by the student. Examples and other necessary general information are not classified as either large ideas, specific terms, or vocabulary. Recording this

information deviates from the "T" pattern by being placed in a verbatim fashion across the center line filling both the right and left columns. A label (GI-general information; Ex-example, or BKG-background) may be written to the left to assist in quick identification of the type of information positioned there (Figure 5). This information is studied by rereading until it is thoroughly understood. In the case of examples, the information should be studied until the student knows the information well enough to create his own examples to demonstrate the same concept.

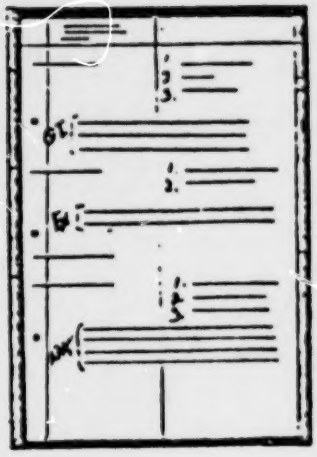

Figure 5

Spacing

Notes are greatly improved when the note-maker deliberately skips a line or two to separate each group of information. This chunking appearance will later aid the recall process (Figures 1-5).

Overlapping

The T-Note system becomes effective for review through overlapping the pages for self-questioning. First the pages are removed from the loose-leaf notebook and placed on a flat surface with only the left column of the "T" showing (Figure 6).

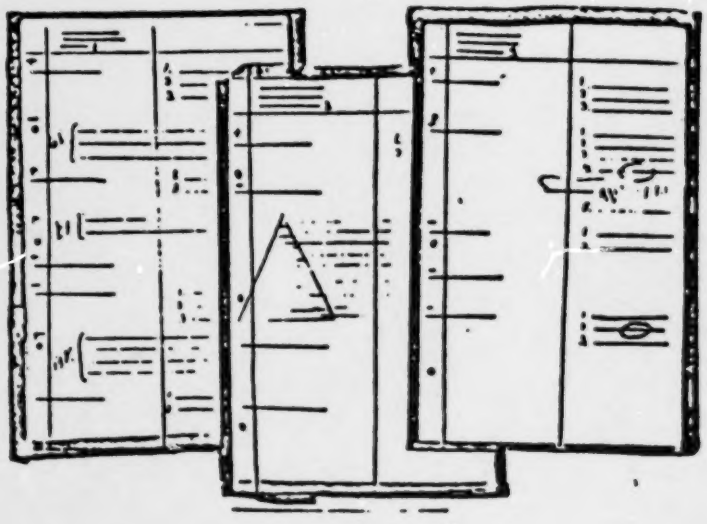

Figure 6/7

The large ideas then become a self-test. The review self-test simulates an actual test situation. Studying this large idea-to-detail step by itself usually assures survival on most exams. The reverse overlap procedure, studying right-to-left, is used to study the details in relation to the main idea.

The overlap review process for self-testing becomes even more effective when combined with a recording of success or failure on the self-test. A simple "+" or "-" beside the large ideas each time they are reviewed can give guidelines to items which should be reviewed further (Figure 7). For example, a student who names only two of the three causes of the Civil War would place a "-" beside the large item. During the next review ne would then attempt to recall all three items, finally placing a "+" beside the item when he is successful. Once he has committed to memory all items on the same page, that page can be discarded from the overlap review process. When all the pages have been discarded in both forward and reverse overlap reviews, success on tests is more likely (Figure 8).

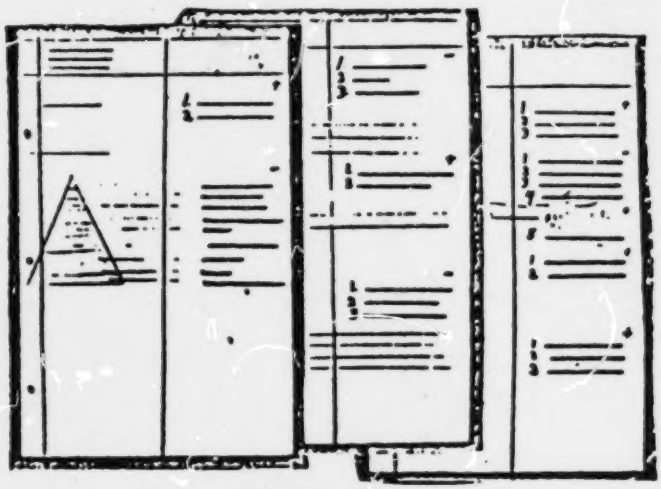

Figure 8

Summary

A short interview with a student needing immediate advice to improve his learning performance is not a time to attempt to solve all his study skills problems. However, the techniques of chapter mapping, chapter keys, and T-Note making can salvage a student having immediate academic problems or stimulate interest in a more thorough study skills course for a later time.

How to study authorities:

Walter Pauk	-How to Study in College
Francis P. Robinson	-Effective Study
Frank L. Christ	-SR/SE Resource Book
Thomas F. Staton	-How to Study
Laia Hanau	-The Study Game

Biography

Elvis G. Clark has been an instructor of college reading and study skills at Mineral Area College, Flat River, Missouri, since 1967. He was a participant in the 1973 EPDA Institute held in Dodge City, Kansas, for community college teachers of reading and study skills. Committed to development of self-concept, he frequently leads workshops called "Adventures and Attitudes."

Archie D. Davis has been an instructor and director of Reading Services at Illinois Central College, East Peoria, Illinois, since 1974. He directed the 1973 EPDA Institute held in Dodge City, Kansas, for community college teachers of reading and study skills. Believing in the importance of study skills to learning, he frequently teaches inservice workshops for teachers and administrators,